

# Community and Democracy in Programme Development for a Master of Arts in Teaching

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The historians who seek to describe what occurs in democratic societies are right, therefore, in assigning much to general causes and in devoting their chief attention to discover them; but they are wrong in wholly denying the special influence of individuals because they cannot easily trace or follow it.

Alexis de Tocqueville  
*Democracy in America, Book 1, chapter 20*

*ABSTRACT* This article describes principles of democratic thought used as a foundation to develop an alternative teacher certification programme – a Masters of Arts in Teaching for middle-secondary level teachers. Recent reports attest to the importance of alternative certification as a means to respond to the widespread teacher shortage in the US. However, these reports rarely suggest the underlying rationale for particular design processes. This article discusses: (a) processes used by a university and its local community to co-design an alternative teacher education programme, (b) programme elements resulting from this co-design process, (c) a proposed model of democratic programme evaluation, and (d) the strengths and concerns the process has generated. This report suggests that as universities respond to the call for broadening community inclusiveness, often articulated in a campus mission statement, consideration must be given to competing issues of efficiency in programme implementation and inclusiveness of multiple design perspectives.

## INTRODUCTION

The development of a Master of Arts in Teaching programme might not be the first place one would look for evidence of the interplay of democratic processes. However, a review of the background, development and implementation of a new Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) programme at

Southern Illinois University Edwardsville reveals both the influence of the 'general causes' to which de Tocqueville alludes and 'the special influences of individuals' to which he bids historians pay more attention. Bold national plans for advancing democracy must intersect with the activities of small communities using democratic processes if such plans are to come to fruition.

In this article, we first describe and analyse democratic principles and community involvement employed in the development of our middle-secondary level MAT programme. We weave throughout our discussion considerations of several key aspects of our programme: an Adventures of the American Mind (AAM) project that MAT candidates develop to present and share with the school community in which they are placed; strands of learning, rather than traditional course structures, with the intent of building a community of scholars; and an evaluation plan that emphasizes democratic learning and community involvement. The second section of this article provides a general context for programme development; the third is a description and analysis of the processes we used; the fourth describes how the programme has unfolded in its very early stages; and the final section concludes with implications for democratic learning and for greater community involvement in teacher education.

#### DEMOCRACY AND COMMUNITY: GENERAL CAUSES, INDIVIDUAL INFLUENCES

Democracy operates at many levels. For example, the United Nations, whatever its faults, is the closest thing we have to a world-wide governing body, and here countries throughout the world act on a range of democratic processes. In the United States, our representatives in Washington, DC carry out, at least in theory, the will of the people. We begin this section with a brief look at the parameters for our programme as they emerged from Washington. We then summarize positions that question the very operation of democracy, consider local needs for community involvement and briefly describe existing programmes similar to our own.

##### *Democratic action at the national level*

The Library of Congress is the largest library in the world, containing more than 126 million items on about 530 miles of bookshelves. The numbers are daunting: 19 million books, 2.6 million recordings, 12 million photographs, 4.8 million maps and 56 million manuscripts. Legislative Grant 00G-LIB-NO001, known as Adventures of the American Mind (AAM), is one attempt to make this massive resource available to schools and teachers. Recent technological advancements such as digitalization and the internet present new opportunities for schools to access these under-utilized materials. Information is a key component for democratic action, and greater utilization of this resource by teachers and students has been long overdue.

In 1992, Senator Richard Durbin of Illinois contacted the Southern Illinois University system with an invitation to become a part of this Library of Congress AAM programme (see: [www.siu.edu/EDUCATION/AAM](http://www.siu.edu/EDUCATION/AAM)). The SIU community, primarily through the offices of the vice president of the university system and deans of the Schools of Education, prepared a proposal for university involvement. Included in this proposal was the additional clause that the SIU Schools of Education at the Carbondale and Edwardsville campuses would institute programmes to prepare individuals who held a bachelor's degree and wanted to become certified to teach in a secondary school classroom. This marriage of two educational ideas thus became the conceptual framework for what is now our Master of Arts in Teaching programme.

### *Debates about the meanings of democracy*

We take pause here to consider the disagreements that various groups may have with our description of the democratic process so far and consider additional depictions. The perspective understood by liberal definition is that 'democracy' has become a tool of polemics and a theatre of contestation for various ideological groups. For example, to Marxists it is a contradictory concept that is fluent in the capitalist circle and used as tool of exploitation and oppression (Cohen and Rogers, 1983; Bowles and Gintis, 1986). For the neomarxists, it is a critical methodology for the advancement of knowledge and the empowerment of the learning community (Freire, 1997; Apple, 2001). For the postmodernist, it is a mere tool of discourse employed by capitalist ideologues to ensure, nurture and maintain a monolithic power structure in which power, knowledge and ideology are retained by the powerful elites (Foucault, 1999). Those who hold to a more conservative philosophy – 'strict constructionists' – in the US, link democratic principles directly to text of the US Constitution, and engage in the hermeneutic dance far different from what is found in critical theorist or postmodernist circles.

The extent to which Legislative Grant OOG-LIB-N0001 represents democratic action in its highest form or, to the contrary, narrow vested interests possibly evidenced in local spending, is beyond the scope of this article. Certain groups, firm believers in democratic principles, protest loudly when the federal government becomes involved in education in any way; the argument posited is that funding for schooling is the responsibility of the individual states. Indeed, our faculty continue to debate the philosophical principles behind many of the decisions of our government, but we also clearly recognize when it is time for action. Our academic community began the task of developing a programme to use the available federal funds wisely.

### *Inquiries and discussion at the local level*

Even as Senator Durbin was engaged in Washington in a process to secure these Library of Congress funds for Illinois, our faculty were engaged in discussions about a certification programme that might better address the

needs of individuals wanting to enter the teaching profession as a career change. Our informal discussions were driven by inquiries from accountants, laboratory technicians, bank tellers and bakers, all wondering if there was a way they could parlay an already-earned college degree into a teaching certificate. We were able to direct these interested parties into existing programmes, but for many an additional two or more years of coursework and student teaching was required. None of these programmes was tailored specifically to the needs of these individuals.

Teachers and administrators in our community also saw a need for a creative programme to serve these potential educators. Several administrators shared the view that mature individuals who were considering education as a second calling often possessed skills and experiences that gave them special insights on effective teaching. We knew from research that many teachers who worked with non-traditional student teachers often found them dedicated, enthusiastic and hard-working (Humphrey and Wechsler, 2005). Additionally, we noted the importance placed on other desirable abilities characteristic of non-traditional students, in particular flexibility and commitment to the student community (Dickar, 2005). The life experiences these individuals would be able to share with students held potential to add a great deal to the classroom. We needed a programme designed to tap into this talent pool.

Linda Darling-Hammond (1990) and Darling-Hammond et al. (2002) observed the same trends nationally that we witnessed locally: alternative certification as a way of overcoming attendance barriers, such as programme costs and length of time to graduate. Daniel Humphrey and Marjorie Wechsler (2005) posited that such programmes might indeed increase the overall candidate graduation rate, but raised questions about the quality of the preparation that these candidates receive. Our informal discussions over several years considered the difficulties of devising a programme that was both convenient for those wishing to change career and yet focused on excellence in teaching. As we looked at the literature on alternative certification, it was clear that others were struggling with this same conundrum.

#### *A review of alternative certification programmes*

Several factors, such as projected large-scale teacher retirement and rising K-12 (5 to 18 years) student enrolment rates, have intensified the need to increase the number of individuals matriculating through US teacher education programmes (Cortez, 2001; Fielder and Haselkorn, 1999; Ng, 2003). Attempts to increase undergraduate certification have been only marginally successful, especially in areas such as mathematics, science, special and bilingual education where shortages are reportedly large (Wilson et al., 2001). To broaden the population source and thus the number of graduates in these areas, several forms of alternative teacher certification programme have

been developed. These programmes take place in a variety of settings, from small colleges to larger research universities.

The programmes we reviewed were similar in three respects: requirement of the baccalaureate degree; use of tenure line faculty to teach courses; and university control of programme design. University mission accounted for some design variation. Research universities, more so than teaching universities, tend to link their programme to a Master's degree and control the university-school partnership programme design. The least consistent design aspect of all the reviewed programmes, regardless of mission, is the construct of school-based practice teaching. Other analyses, such as the Humphrey and Wescher (2005) review of seven large funded programmes, noted that school districts rather than universities control programme design in some models. These funded programmes typically (a) replace practice teaching with immediate classroom and contractual responsibilities and (b) use district level personnel to mentor candidates, deliver coursework and provide formative feedback and evaluation. No studies of the alternative certification programmes we reviewed indicated the purposeful engagement of a broad base of representative community in the co-development of a teacher education programme.<sup>1</sup>

#### DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

Proposals for new university programmes must consider many factors: tuition, prerequisites, credits, scheduling and faculty, to name only a few. Though all are important, an extended discussion of the details of such elements can quickly become mundane. Rather than dwell on the many details, we have extracted for our discussion three main components that highlight democratic principles and community involvement: the AAM project, strands of learning, and procedures for evaluation. In this section we describe how interested parties provided input on the design elements of these programmes, saving further discussion of how these elements have been implemented for a later section.

##### *Consultations on the Adventures of the American Mind project*

The faculty committee that embarked on the initial outline for the MAT understood that a percentage of funding for the initial stages of the programme would come from the Library of Congress grant. Our task was to ensure that this Adventures of the American Mind component of the MAT would be an integral part of the programme rather than merely an afterthought. What emerged in these early stages were ideas that centred on making the project useful to school communities rather than a paper submitted for professorial approval. The outline described a project that would: emphasize state-of-the-art teaching technologies; utilize Library of Congress resources; contribute to the school and community in which the

candidate was placed; and flow from the candidate's own interests and growing expertise.

As discussions continued over a period of months, the AAM project proved from the outset to be one of the least controversial aspects of the programme proposal. Master's degrees in any field traditionally have some sort of exit requirement, be it a thesis, project, demonstration or formal presentation. The AAM project could easily fit into this traditional mould. Programme faculty from the School of Education viewed the project as consistent with requirements for our existing Master's programmes and thus compatible with an already developed overall philosophy. University administration and faculty from various other disciplines who participated in informal discussions all saw merit in the first outlines of the project.

Public school administrators and teachers also expressed increasing levels of interest in the AAM project. Administrators saw an opportunity to link these projects with existing school improvement plans. All schools in Illinois must have such plans, with state-required yearly assessments and updates. Classroom teachers began thinking of ways to tie ideas for projects to Illinois Learning Standards and their own unit and lesson plans. Even experienced teachers were astonished at the resources available through the Library of Congress. The initial outline for the AAM project to be completed by each candidate showed potential to be a centrepiece of the MAT programme.

#### *Consultations on strands of learning*

The faculty who would be most closely involved wanted to create a programme that would utilize democratic principles, be responsive to various interested communities and emphasize democratic action as an ongoing focus. As discussions ensued, several faculty wanted to develop a structure consistent with these ideals: for them, a listing of semester-long classes similar to the undergraduate programme would not be adequate. Others saw any departure from long-standing university course and credit structures as unworkable, and proposed a programme tying existing graduate courses together with a few new courses and a student teaching practicum. A model for such a programme had already been formulated at our sister institution, Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Programme structure thus became an area for debate. Proponents of using existing courses pointed out that, given a Fall 2004 deadline established for implementation of the MAT, building an entirely new curriculum could easily involve much more time than was available. Costs could also be reduced by folding MAT candidates' coursework in with courses already in our catalogue. Administrators and faculty in favour of 'something different' argued that hopes for a design which incorporated our best understandings of a community of scholars would be severely compromised under a business-as-usual approach.

As these debates among faculty continued, we began to ask for perspectives from public school administrators and teachers. While several saw this question as something for university personnel to decide, others reflected on their own coursework leading toward certification. Among these ideas was the concern that student teaching experiences were central to professional growth, but some of the required teacher preparation courses were less valuable than others. Their thoughts were consistent with feedback we had been receiving from our undergraduate programme candidates and some lines of educational research: candidates often struggle to make connections between the disparate courses that make up the typical teacher education programme (see, for example: Pryor, 2004; Roach and Cohen, 2002).

Proposals for what we later defined as ‘strands of learning’ eventually held sway, but only after several months of full discussion of these structural issues. With an eye toward the future, we were also reviewing programme requirements, recruitment procedures and schedules for required admission and certification tests administered by the state of Illinois. Given that developing and designing the strands would also take time, School of Education administration and faculty agreed to delay plans for implementation of the MAT for one year, until Fall 2005. With the overall structure finally a matter of agreement, this new target date allowed for a more thoughtful dialogue on the curriculum the strands would embrace.

In extended consultation with the faculty, administration and colleagues from the College of Arts and Sciences, we developed the strands of learning that students would need to sustain them for years to come. The strands developed are: pedagogy; classroom management; technology (including the AAM project); special education; educational psychology; foundations of American education; literacy in the content areas. These strands were consistent with areas required for certification and could potentially be woven together as a programme-long series with a strong sense of coherence. Our hope was that the configuration of programme-long strands would provide a place for continued learning and discussion in a way that the configuration of discrete coursework would not. It was clear that such a structure would require considerable flexibility on the part of faculty who would take the lead on one or more of the strands.

### *Consultations on programme evaluation*

As an outline for a proposal that could be submitted for formal approval was developed, we saw both a need and an opportunity to create an extensive evaluation plan. While much discussion about aspects of the overall evaluation model continues even as the programme has begun, in the early stages our concern was with what we termed ‘richness of evaluation’. University policies provide standard procedures for programme evaluation, but we wanted to go beyond these and include a greater emphasis on

identifying our successes or shortcomings in terms of community involvement. While we had no doubts that whatever plans we developed would need to be modified over time, we wanted, at the outset, an approach to evaluation that would be fully inclusive.

At the most basic level, the ultimate question for any teacher education programme is: Does it produce good teachers? An underlying problem several faculty saw with the nature of this question was their understanding of what the current educational climate dictates as good teaching. In the present environment in the US, a good teacher is someone whose students achieve high scores on standardized tests. Admittedly, we oversimplify here; however, we wanted an overall evaluation plan that would extend beyond models based on various versions of this limited notion. Indeed, we wanted to develop an array of evaluation procedures that would promote democratic ideals and more fully involve the many segments of the community that would participate in the programme. In an era when standardized tests tend to drive the school curriculum and when teachers find themselves spending an inordinate amount of time teaching to such tests, we envisioned the possibility that a set of richer evaluation components for our own programme could, over time, have a positive effect both on our own programme and on the curricular emphases in high schools throughout our service area. While recognizing the highly idealistic reaches of such thoughts, we saw no reason to abandon them (Gallagher, 2005; Sacks, 1999).

We should point out that during this stage of programme development these concepts of evaluation were still ideas without a clear focus. We were able to identify a number of criteria around which we could gather data, but did not as yet have an agreed cohesive model for evaluation. Some of the necessary aspects we proposed involved number crunching: students enrolled over a three or five year period; placement rates of programme graduates; assessment rates of time-to-degree data; and the number of AAM projects accepted for conferences. Additional ideas focused on assessment of unit plans prepared from Library of Congress materials, feedback from public school administrators, follow-up questionnaires sent to programme graduates and their employers, and results of interview data with the MAT faculty. None of these ideas alone was particularly startling, but taken together with existing university evaluation procedures they at least approached the comprehensive package we had conceptualized. As the time came for submission of the programme for university approval, we developed a list of elements that we considered central to programme evaluation, but admittedly did not yet comprise a fully inclusive model that logically tied all evaluation components together.

#### *Approval processes, formal and informal*

Consultation is one thing, programme approval another. The typical university approach to democratic process is: form a committee. No matter how much consultation takes in programme formation stages, formal approval



must be routed through university and state channels. The consideration of new programmes can be a cumbersome process, but it is one of those necessary evils through which faculty governance is played out. The Joint Committee on Teacher Preparation (JCTP), a committee composed of both School of Education and College of Arts and Science faculty on our campus, was first in line to review the MAT proposal. This group made suggestions, and programme faculty made revisions. The JCTP approved the programme and passed it on to the Graduate School.

The Programs Committee of the Graduate School, made up of faculty from departments across campus, saw merit in the material submitted. The committee needed a more detailed explanation of the strands of learning, however, and ultimately insisted that the proposed strands should more closely mirror existing university course outlines including credit and tuition structures. The secondary education faculty assigned course numbers and hours to segments of the strands, with the understanding that several faculty members from different departments within the School of Education would share their expertise and co-design assignments for students that tied the strands together. Although strands would parallel the descriptive language of other courses in the university schedule, it was understood that faculty would treat the parts more holistically. After some negotiation and compromise, the Programs Committee recommended approval by the Graduate Council. This body forwarded the proposal to state governing agencies.

#### *The underlying nature of consultation and approval processes*

The involvement of interested parties is necessary, and understandably time-consuming. Those of us in colleges and universities find ourselves working on multiple tasks centred on teaching, research and service. Public school teachers and administrators suffer from what Michael Apple (1986) has termed intensification: additional tasks are added to already full plates, but nothing is taken away. It is often not enough to invite participation: even interested parties find themselves so immersed in other projects they sometimes trust in others to represent their interests. The *Catch-22* here is that when it comes to the time for implementation, some of those called upon to do the hands-on work ask vigorously, 'Why wasn't I consulted on this?' The fact that their input was indeed invited gets buried under the weight of getting things started. If real community involvement is to be achieved, various forms of persuasion, cajolery, and even insistence, must be employed.

The approval process for university programmes can easily be understood as yet another example of the seemingly endless layers of bureaucracy that plague our institutions. As we write, the US media are engaged in an orgy of excoriation with regard to the bureaucratic mess that cost lives after Hurricane Katrina. Distinctions must be made between procedures put in place to ensure democratic participation and the excesses that can result when buck-passing becomes a standard procedure. Our own

university approval process at times seemed to us simply a bother, but our better selves recognized that the consideration of a variety of disparate viewpoints can ultimately provide safeguards for the community and higher quality end results. These approval processes also made for a consistent flow of information and a series of steps to which both departments proposing programmes and committees considering them must adhere.

#### PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION AND DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

As 2005 draws to a close, the actual MAT programme as finally approved is less than a year old. Even in these early stages, we can begin to describe the initial steps of implementation while the successes and glitches are still fresh. We introduce this section of our discussion with a brief review of the overall need for community involvement in society. After providing an overview of how the MAT, with the emphasis on frequent early field experiences, differs from more traditional teacher education programmes in the US, we pay special attention to the AAM project, the strands of learning, and evolving plans for evaluation. A broad series of questions arises: What kind of programme does a community-based development process produce? Is it worth the effort? Are programme goals being realized? While it is clearly too early to provide definitive answers, we hope that describing programme implementation in its infancy will prove useful to an understanding of the overall process.

##### *The need for community involvement*

Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone* (2001) painstakingly describes the downward trend in the cultivation of civic enterprise during the past 50 years in the US. Putnam considers a massive amount of data from a variety of sources: participatory rates in indices of civic engagement such as volunteering in schools; meetings of neighbours for a book discussion; citizens leading scout troops; and individuals volunteering to help get out the vote – to note just a few of his areas of inquiry. Putnam proposes several sources of this disengagement, including faster-paced lives and women in the workplace. Most telling, however, is Putnam's call for the re-engagement of community. Among his recommendations is the need to disaggregate the contexts in which disengagement might *not occur*, and to develop strategies to *enhance these engaged contexts*. Under these conditions of engagement, for example, we could ask: Do particular sub-sets of community, such as populations of nurses, doctors and teachers, also fall prey to disengagement trends? Consideration must be given to aspects of programmes that train these professionals, and how they might provide for communal revival.

Compelling as Putnam's call for communal revival might appear, others have recently offered their substantive rebuttal to notions of widespread disengagement, particularly as disengagement might define the university community (Bond and Patterson, 2005). University administrators and

academics, these authors suggest, truly believe they are both in principle and in practice engaged *in* and not merely *of* their communities. At least one report suggests that building university programmes in which commitment to civic engagement is central are inherently a rather cumbersome and awkward feat for universities to organize (Weinberg, 2005).

Two impediments might appear as universities work towards engaging the participation of members within their community. The first of these is that there appears to be an unevenness among the strategies used to seek out participant engagement (for example, open-ended requests on a webpage or direct engagement during a phone request). The second impediment is that the very participants that universities seek often have unclear expectations of their role in programme design. In part, then, a lack of community participation in programme design might be due not to a lack of interest in seeking this participation, rather this lack of inclusiveness might be a result of how academics actually practice their craft. University work often takes place at a variety of geographical levels – school sites, hospitals, pharmacies and other businesses, etc. – and is accomplished under circumstances with an already complex nexus of interested parties (Bond and Patterson, 2005, p. 333). In short, universities recognize the historical role of community voice within formal structures such as their mission statement, but the multi-layered atmosphere created by engaging a community presence can appear as an impediment to all participants who believe that programme design and implementation is a simple and efficacious process (Boyer, 1994). The considerations of community involvement, and perceptions of the importance of efficiency, form the backdrop for the reflections that follow.

### *Community, early field experiences and the teachable moment*

While teacher education in the US has received increased scrutiny during the two decades since the publication of *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), issues of community and democracy have often been marginalized in relation to other concerns. In the current educational environment, teacher education reform emphasizes increased academic preparation, an expanded role for schools, and standards-based accountability (Parkay and Stanford, 2004). Over time, our own undergraduate certification programme has responded with reviews of teaching field requirements, increased observation time in schools, and attempts to adhere to the ever-advancing emphasis on teaching standards. Even as programmes respond in these three areas, their structures typically continue with discrete courses in both the teaching field and pedagogy. By structuring the MAT around strands rather than courses and bringing students together as a cohort group, we have attempted to include but go beyond standards-based reforms. We try actively to encourage the development of a sense of community rather than leave this to chance.

The cohort of candidates participates in weekly seminars centred on the seven strands. These seminars have become infused with questions and discussions flowing from in-school observations completed within the same time frame. Field experiences taken concurrently with the strands also provide essential advantages over the inevitable unevenness of programmes in which courses in educational psychology, foundations of education, technology, and special education are completed as isolated units. Strands coupled with field experiences rather than separate courses have so far yielded increased opportunities to utilize the teachable moment with salient text and journal readings, assignments and conversations about observed practice. While we see strong potential in these differences between more traditional programmes and our MAT, our initial experiences have not been without some contention, as the following sections describe.

#### *Early stages of the AAM projects*

Candidates have already begun to develop plans for their AAM projects. Examples of projects currently being developed include integrating culture into a pre-foreign language course for middle school students and developing additional strategies for using primary sources for at-risk students. As they continue to develop, implement and evaluate their projects, the candidates work closely with teachers and administrators at their assigned school districts and university faculty. The projects are indeed serving as one focal point for candidates in the programme; they report many discussions with school personnel on ideas for their projects, discussions which in turn lead to a greater understanding of the school environment.

One difficulty we have encountered centres on the expectations held by school personnel that our candidates will contribute projects based on the school improvement plans that some of our host schools already have in place. Several administrators would like to see the AAM project tied in more closely to these plans. This problem should not prove to be insurmountable, but might put candidates in a position where they are being asked to respond to an area of less personal interest. What seemed in theory to be a positive project for both schools and candidates has proved to be a complex process. University faculty continue to work with administrators, teachers and candidates to guide these projects to ensure that they are not burdensome or irrelevant to the candidate. This situation does raise the question of whether we are trying to do too much with this project design. We will return to this question in our concluding section.

#### *Early implementation of the strands of learning*

One of the central purposes for developing a series of strands of learning rather than a set of discreet courses was to create a community of scholars involving the candidates, programme faculty and mentoring teachers. Our candidates are able to return from school-based field experiences to share in

seminars some differences in school cultures which make democratic principles easy or difficult to bring about. Early feedback from candidates has been positive. They have a developing sense of seeing teaching in its entirety. They are beginning to better understand why it is important to bring together general principles of learning theory with the particular concerns of special-needs students. Readings on the foundations of education enhance the understanding of sociological conditions that candidates observe in schools, and inform the content of the unit curriculum plans they develop. We wanted candidates to do more than read and discuss John Dewey's *Democracy and Education*, and they are doing so. Their immersion in a school culture for an entire school year provides candidates with the opportunity to bring such books to life.

The programme as approved reflected our desire to prepare teachers who would involve their own students in classroom decision-making; who themselves would be involved in the school as a community; and who would promote the participation of the school and all its members in the larger layers of community in which they lived. Such ideals can be codified into statements of objectives and emphasized in a syllabus, but actual implementation is clearly more easily said than done. While our ideals remain intact, their interaction with reality proves interesting. All too often, those of us involved in schools preach about the merits of democracy from pedestals perched within exceedingly authoritarian institutions (Giroux, 1981). The high school social studies teacher, for example, extols the virtues of democratic principles to students who themselves are provided with few opportunities to engage in democratic practice. High school students might get to decide on the theme for the junior prom, but little else. Teacher candidates, observing these realities, return to campus for seminar discussions with a greater appreciation of the levels at which democracy does and does not operate, and can further see how their questions can be entertained in the context of any of the strands we cover.

Some faculty are still working out questions concerning their own levels of programme involvement. In as much as individuals might have primary responsibility for only one or two strands, they sometimes find that establishing their own place in the community is more elusive. Individuals whose classroom experiences span a period of years, and who are used to teaching a course with a beginning, middle and end, now find themselves discussing topics in unusual sequences due to questions that arise from candidate experiences in the schools. Faculty are also uncertain which concepts have been covered by other team members in seminars. An ideal solution here would be to have four or five faculty attend all seminars, no matter who might be listed as the lead discussant. In practice, this is exceedingly difficult in university life. Conflicting schedules, demands of other course loads, research requirements and service commitments militate against what might be ideal. Just as candidates sometimes feel themselves going in different directions with their AAM projects, faculty have similar

conflicts with course requirements. As with the AAM, we will return to this conflict in our concluding section.

### *The evolution of programme evaluation plans*

An aspect of the programme that has undergone significant change since our initial discussions has been the overall plan for evaluation. Even as the programme was submitted for approval, we were still seeking a model that would unify the various evaluation elements. One theme we have discussed is the concept of 'democratic evaluation'. The geographic diversity of this interest is demonstrated by UNICEF's 1998 Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean's working paper and the Brunel Centre for Democratic Evaluation at Brunel University in West London. Scholarly works included Ernest House and Kenneth Howe (2000) and Katherine Ryan and Lizanne DeStefano (2000). House and Howe, for example, provide an extended discussion of three guiding principles: inclusion, dialogue and deliberation. While our programme development employed such guiding principles, we continue to investigate ways of integrating them into our programme evaluation model. One helpful possibility involves the concept of a logic model for evaluation.

The logic model is a schematic diagram of essential programme components connected in a causal sequence to the programme's desired outcomes (Mayeske, 1991, 1992; Smith, 1989; Wholey, 1979, 1987). There are four steps in the development of a logic model: (a) identify key components, (b) determine causal relations and sequence (c) identify performance indicators, and (d) diagram a series of 'if-then' statements about relations among key components. This description of the structural and operational characteristics of a programme must be based on empirical knowledge, and is typically begun toward the end of the needs assessment. The logic model (a) provides a testable rationale for believing that certain outcomes will result from programme implementation, (b) continues from needs assessment to the beginning of summative evaluation, and (c) should be highly useful in monitoring programme progress and guiding the programme revisions and summative evaluation. In short, this model will provide guidance for us to review the efficacy of our programme goals and assumptions, and allow us to collaborate in identifying the foci of our evaluation plan.

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN TEACHER EDUCATION

We have attempted to describe in this article both the general context and the specific circumstances surrounding the development of a new Master of Arts in Teaching programme. Much of this description has focused on our perceptions of the democratic processes and community involvement employed in programme development. One rather obvious concluding point is that an emphasis on full community participation in a democratic process of programme development takes time. In the case of our MAT programme, the planned date for implementation had to be pushed back an entire year. Even

then, we engaged in the final recruitment stage at a date later than we would have liked due to the lengthy formal approval process required. Proponents of dialogue since the time of Plato have experienced and described similar phenomena. A second conclusion, however, flows directly from this involvement and can be posed in the form of a question: Have we devised a programme that is overly complex?

In holding to democracy and community as key focal points, we cannot help but ask ourselves whether our programme asks too much and tries to do too much. Indeed, in general terms it may very well be the case that by involving interested parties throughout the development process, and by taking their suggestions seriously, academic programmes may grow in complexity by accepting good ideas and adding them to the mix. In our own case, the AAM project might try to bring together too many components. The strands might be expecting too much of faculty. The evaluation procedures might be seeking too much information.

For some of us, an old aphorism lingers at the periphery of our thoughts: Keep it simple. A more elegant explanation was set forth in Raymond Callahan's 1962 publication, *Education and the Cult of Efficiency*. If efficiency, rather than democracy and community, had been a key driving force in the background of our efforts, we would no doubt have crafted a programme very different from the one that emerged. We might, for example, have retained the standard certification courses, a project that flows primarily from the candidates' own interests, and a much streamlined plan for evaluation. Democracy, however, is messy and community building takes time and effort. Over a period of years we may indeed find it necessary to streamline aspects of this alternative certification programme, but we remain dedicated to a framework in which the various programme components intersect to promote the broad ideals we feel are so important to model in public schools. Our vision is that the teachers who graduate from our programme appreciate the messiness of the educative process, and recognize the necessity of looking well beyond extensive standardized testing programmes as the principal measures of educational success.

We see democracy as a process and function of group effort, where the responsibility of design and implementation of a task lies in the mutual voice and process efforts of all community members. In our recent experience in this deliberative effort, we have learned to expect dialogue, negotiation, consensus and compromise as integral parts of the democratic process. Fraught as this process can be with conflict, confrontation and agitation, we agree that the overt and tangential results yield a more agreeable and empowering designing community than one imposed by an anonymous power (Gutmann and Thompson, 1996). We write as a reaction to the potential of political disempowerment and social disengagement historically superimposed on the programme design process. Whether or not aspects of this teacher education model are easily replicated in other forums is, however,

open to question. In the broadest sense, programme design processes evolve with the collapse and revival of trends in US citizens' willingness to understand what it means to participate in civic matters. On a smaller scale, university educational programme design mandates will no doubt continue to be challenged by a duality of cultural assumptions from which these trends emanate. Longstanding among these assumptions is the recognition of the institutional and social benefits of efficient organizational behaviours.

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#### NOTE

- 1 Alternative Certification programmes reviewed for this article were:  
 Illinois State University  
 ([http://www.coe.ilstu.edu/ci/teachcert/alt\\_cert/alt\\_cert.shtml](http://www.coe.ilstu.edu/ci/teachcert/alt_cert/alt_cert.shtml));  
 Missouri Southern State University  
 (<http://www.mssu.edu/edu/alternative%20certification.htm>);  
 Southern Illinois University Carbondale  
 (<http://www.siu.edu/~currinst/html/mat.html>);  
 Arizona State University  
 (<http://coe.asu.edu/candi/program.php>);  
 University of Maine  
 (<http://www.umaine.edu/edhd/acadprogs/grad/mateaching.htm>);  
 University of South Carolina  
 (<http://www.ite.sc.edu/ite/secmat.html>);  
 Washington State University  
 (<http://www.educ.wsu.edu/tl/2ndarycert.htm>)

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